

Minutes of the 4th Meeting of the Coordination Forum held on 21st September, 2006 at the Assam Administrative Staff College, Khanapara

The 4th meeting of the Coordination Forum was held on 21st September, 2006 at the Assam Administrative Staff College, Khanapara at 11:00 a.m.

List of members of the Coordination Forum and officers present in the meeting are appended at **Annexure-I**.

(1) Welcome and Introductions

Shri Jadab Prasad Saikia, Member of the Commission welcomed the members of the Forum. He formally introduced Shri P.K. Bora, the new Chairperson of the Commission to the participants. Thereafter, all the participants were asked to introduce themselves.

The meeting was presided over by Chairperson of the Commission. In his inaugural speech, Shri Bora welcomed all members and expressed his regret for not being able to hold the meeting within the stipulated period of three months. He stated that the delay was due to engagement of entire Commission staff in the Tariff making process for FY 2006-07.

Thereafter the following deliberations were held as per agenda.

(2) Agenda 1: Confirmation of Minutes of 3rd Meeting of Coordination Forum held on 10.02.2006

The minutes of the 3rd meeting of the Coordination Forum held on 10 February, 2006 already circulated amongst the members, was placed before the Forum for confirmation and the same was treated as read and then confirmed after incorporating the observations of PGCIL against agenda No. 4 as advised to AERC vide their letter No. NERTS/AERC dated 13.04.2006.

(3) Agenda 2: Follow up Action on Minutes of 3rd Meeting of Coordination Forum held on 10.02.2006

Action Taken Reports (ATR) on the minutes submitted by concerned utilities were circulated among the participants and details available in the annexures appended. Some of these ATRs are briefly discussed as follows:

(a) On the matter of Demand Survey, the ASEB Chairman, Shri S.C. Das informed that M/s SMEC International Private Limited had completed a demand survey in the state. M/s SMEC proposed three scenarios, out of which scenario 2 appears to be both realistic and reasonable and has been approved by the ASEB and successor companies in a recent meeting held to discuss these issues. The Chairman stated that the study will now be forwarded to the Government of Assam for its approval.

(b) On the power position in Upper Assam, MD UAEDCL, Shri D.K. Dutta indicated that power supply position has improved in comparison to last year. He stated that there was a maximum shortfall of 70 Mw for the month of August, 2006 and average shortfall varied from 15 to 55 MW in August and 20 to 55 MW in September. Most of these shortfalls of power were due to system constraints in some areas of the company and AEGCL network.

Intervening in the issue, Chairman ASEB informed that the need for the second circuit of 220 KV Kathalguri- Tinsukia line has already been recognized to address the power shortage situation in upper Assam area. This could not be achieved due to lack of funds. It is now proposed that the second circuit will be constructed by DONER funding, for which steps has already been initiated and is expected to be completed by March, 2007.

(c) Shri H. Dutta, Member of AERC enquired about the status of program of ONGCL for improvement of Gas supply situation of LTPS. In reply the ONGCL representative Shri A.K.Singania informed that they will be able to supply required gas within December 2006 with an increase in their production capacity. At present, ASEB is procuring 0.5 mmscmd gas at APM price and additional gas even if it is made available at non APM price, the power generated will be less expensive than imported power.

(d) On the matter of loss in CTU transmission line, Chairman ASEB wanted to know about the reason for higher transmission loss in NER PGCIL transmission system

which is in order of 4% to 5% in comparison to other region of the country which is reportedly in order of 2.0 % to 2.5 %. In reply Shri V.Sekhar representative of PGCIL opined that in NER, the CTU is dealing with a combined transmission system of 400 KV, 220 KV and 132 KV, therefore, the combined loss is higher in comparison to other regions where CTU is dealing only with 400 KV system. Shri Sekhar was requested to substantiate this statement with necessary information to the Commission.

Action: PGCIL

- (e) On specific query from Chairman ASEB, the PGCIL representative informed that the total energy handling capacity of NER PGCIL network is around 6500 MU and at present PGCIL is handling approx. 6300 MU annually. As such, almost 100% capacity has been utilized which is contrary to the impression created by PGCIL that they are not been able to realize full recovery of cost due to less utilization of transmission capacity in the region. PGCIL was requested to give a report on utilization of their transmission system.

Action: PGCIL

- (f) ASEB Chairman, Shri S.C. Das also pointed out that as a fallout of inadequate rains in the region this monsoon, the ASEB may have to procure power from outside the state at a higher price to meet the demand. He suggested that perhaps a raise in tariff by the Commission would help the utility in this regard.

In response to this statement, Chairperson AERC, Shri P.K. Bora said that any raise in tariff would be an additional burden on the consumers since there had been a hike in tariff only recently.

- (g) Chairman, ASEB also suggested that perhaps some measures may be taken by the state Government to increase Central Government allocation of additional power from NTPC, Kahalgaon station. All participants expressed that the matter should be expedited at the appropriate level.

- (h) On the matter of theft of power, Shri P.K. Barthakur, MD LAEDCL & CAEDCL and Mr D. Dutta MD UAEDCL informed that the Companies has already initiated departmental proceedings against employees of respective companies found to be

conniving in theft of power. Some officers in the level of Junior Engineer were put under suspension.

Action: MD LAEDCL & CAEDCL, MD UAEDCL

- (i) Spot Billing Machines (SBMs) have been introduced in few areas. Although the machines have been procured, they have not been to fully utilized due to lack of trained personnels and some problems in the installed software. The matter has already been taken up with the supplier company. The Chairperson desired that the system should be in operation and submit a report to the Commission by 31st December, 2006.

Action: MD LAEDCL & CAEDCL, MD UAEDCL

- (j) Detailed status of computerized billing is submitted by the respective Discoms. Chairperson AERC drew attention of the MDs of the Discoms that in many cases where computerized bills were served, the respective rows of items in the pre printed forms did not match with the values due to overlapping etc, which causes confusion in the minds of consumers. He suggested exploring the possibility of printing the entire bill instead of printing the figures on pre printed forms to avoid the problem. MDs of the Discoms assured to explore the suggestion made.

It was suggested that all Discoms should confirm to the Commission that the computerised billing programme will be completed by 31st Dec'06.

Action: MD LAEDCL & CAEDCL, MD UAEDCL

- (k) MD LAEDCL informed with statistics that Drop Box facility introduced by Discoms is fast becoming popular among the consumers for their inherent advantage.

(4) Agenda: 3: Utilization of Captive Generation

The AERC has already studied the possibility of tapping captive capacity of power generation which is in the order of 300 MW available with some consumers mostly owned by the Central Government Undertakings. Already Discoms/ ASEB were directed by the Commission to explore the possibility of purchasing power from these sources at the time of need in a transparent manner. Chairman, ASEB informed that, till now no agreement could be made with owners of captive stations like NRL,

GAIL, & IOC, Digboi due to unwillingness of the captive stations to operate in synchronization with the grid.

Chairperson, AERC informed that some Tea Estates having standby generators operating through gas fuel have requested the Commission to allow their generators to run as captive stations. They further requested for granting permission to sell their surplus power to ASEB/ Discoms. AERC has already directed the Discoms to submit a comprehensive report on the matter to the Commission along with their opinion on the subject. It is being decided that Discom/ASEB will submit the report for further action on the matter.

Action: MD LAEDCL & CAEDCL, MD UAEDCL

(5) Agenda 4: Gas supply position in Thermal Stations of APGCL/ DLF/ NEEPCO

Reports submitted by respective agencies are appended to these minutes in **Annexure II**. It is stated that NEEPCO's Kathalguri station has not been able to generate at the full capacity of 291 MW due to short supply of gas and restricted its generation to 230 MW. The Chairperson emphasized the importance of supplying adequate gas to NEEPCO/APGCL/DLF for their generating units by the OIL/ONGC for optimum utilization of their generating capacities.

Action: ONGCL/OIL/APGCL

(6) Agenda 5. Review of overall power scenario and proposed new power projects of State and Central Sector in the state of Assam

Reports submitted by various agencies are placed in **Annexure II & III**. Latest status reports will be submitted to the Commission before the next meeting of the Forum.

Action: APGCL

(7) Agenda 6: Status of transmission utilities and new transmission projects of State and Central Sector in the state of Assam

Reports submitted by different agencies are placed in **Annexure IV & V**.

Representative of PGCIL, Shri Sekhar informed that the HVDC transmission project may not be viable if the entire generating capacity of the ongoing 2000 MW Subansiri Project is allocated to NER states. According to him, at least 1000 MW of power should be exported from the region for viability of the project. The Chairman ASEB opined that viability of the project can not be considered as a priority and therefore should not be a reason for non allocation of required power to NER states. The PGCIL should consider other upcoming projects of the region to make proposed project viable instead of sticking to the ongoing project.

Action: PGCIL

(8) Agenda 7: Rural Electrification / Rajiv Gandhi Gramya Bidyutikaran Yozana (RGGBP)

Report submitted by concerned department of ASEB is placed in **Annexure VI**. Out of 23 districts (old), DPRs for 20 districts has been submitted. However, only one of them has been approved. All members opined that the Power Department of the State Government should take up the matter expeditiously to improve the overall scenario with the concerned Central Government Department..

Action: Power Department of State Government

(9) Agenda 8: Review of progress of APDRP schemes

Reports submitted by concerned Discoms are placed in **Annexure VII**. It was suggested that Discoms will make a cost-benefit report on the completed schemes in terms of reduction of loss and recovery of revenue along with satisfaction of consumers.

Action: MD LAEDCL & CAEDCL, MD UAEDCL.

(10) Agenda 9: Any other matters

a) Conversion of rural unmetered consumers to metered ones: It was informed by Shri S. Rahman, Chief Engineer, Distribution, ASEB that procurement of meters has already been completed and conversion have started from October 2006 and is likely

to be over by December, 2007. It was directed that report should be submitted to the Commission before the next meeting.

Action: MD LAEDCL & CAEDCL, MD UAEDCL

b) Professor A. Goswami, suggested that in inaccessible areas, pilot microhydel schemes may be taken up with the Department of Science & Technology and other interested parties. The suggestion was noted by the concerned department.

The Chairperson on completion of the discussions on agenda items expressed his satisfaction to all the members for their active participation.

The meeting ended with vote of thanks by Shri A. Goswami, Deputy Director (Engg) of the Commission to all the participants.

**List of Persons attending the 4th Meeting of Coordination Forum held
on 21st September, 2006**

- 1) **Shri P.K. Bora, IAS (Retd.),** Chairperson, AERC
- 2) **Shri J. P. Saikia,** Member, AERC
- 3) **Shri H. Dutta,** Member, AERC
- 4) **Shri S. C. Das, IAS,** Chairman, ASEB
- 5) **Shri P. K. Borthakur, IAS, MD,** LAEDCL & CAEDCL
- 6) **Shri D.K. Dutta,** MD, UAEDCL
- 7) **Shri A.S. Chowdhury,** Deputy Secretary to the Government of Assam, Department of Power
- 8) **Shri M. R. Karmakar,** Executive Director (Commercial), NEEPCO, Shillong
- 9) **Shri A. K. Singhanian,** DGM (P), ROBI, ST, ONGC, Nazira
- 10) **Shri N. C. Deka,** MD, AEGCL
- 11) **Shri A. K. Bora,** MD, APGCL
- 12) **Shri G. Bora,** Deputy Secretary to the Government of Assam, Planning & Rural Development Department
- 13) **Shri D. Das,** CGM (RE), ASEB
- 14) **Shri S. Rahman,** CE (D), ASEB
- 15) **Shri V. Shekhar,** AGM (CT& RE), Power Grid Corporation of India, Shillong
- 16) **Shri P. S. Stafford,** DGM (DMS), Power Grid Corporation of India, Shillong
- 17) **Prof. A. K. Goswami,** Former Principal of Cotton College & Non official member of the Forum

List of Officers of AERC present :

- 1) **Shri M. K. Adhikary,** Joint Director (Tariff)
- 2) **Shri Anuj Goswami,** Deputy Director (Engineering)

Smti Neelima Dewri Dutta, ACS, Secretary of the Commission could not attend due to indisposition.